

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Psychiatric Admissions Officer

Class Code: 50562

A. Purpose:

Administers the commitment, admission and release of patients to and from a psychiatric institution to ensure patients' rights are respected and compliance with state rules and regulations and institution policies and procedures.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Psychiatric Admissions Officer works in the administration department of a psychiatric institution. This position does not provide medical services or evaluations. The incumbent interprets and enforces laws and regulations dealing with the commitment, admission, residence and/or release of patients to prevent the abuse of patients' rights. The incumbent supervises and assists in compiling and maintaining of patients' records and documentation.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Makes a pre-admission arrangement for patients to determine the patients' needs and ensure that legal requirements are met.
 - a. Reviews legal documentation and ensures that legal requirements of hospitalization are met and correct papers are filed.
 - b. Determines the type of admission.
 - c. Consults with hospital staff, community agencies, law enforcement officials, and private individuals.
 - d. Drafts all petitions for commitment hearings and processes all physician assessments and certificates for the commitment process, and provides information regarding the type of admission and hearing process.
 - e. Monitors the age of all adolescent patients in the institution so when they reach age 18, they are either discharged or recommitted.
 - f. Arranges forensic court referrals obtaining required information as to the nature of the charges, bonding status, and the type of security required for admittance.
2. Schedules and attends hearings to ensure that legal requirements are met and patient rights are respected.
 - a. Contacts attorneys and physicians.
 - b. Notifies counties of residence.
 - c. Obtains necessary statements and documents.
 - d. Records decisions.
 - e. Provides information.
 - f. Notifies medical records of admissions of changes in the patients' status.
3. Investigates patients' legal residences to provide an accurate billing of counties or Indian Health Services for indigent patients.
4. Monitors patients under involuntary commitment and schedules review and recommitment hearings as set forth by state law and notifies all parties involved to ensure patients are not detained longer than necessary.

5. Monitors the status of patients having legal involvement or threatened bodily harm to another person and notifies law enforcement officials or threatened individuals of the admission and release of the patient to ensure the patients' status within the institution is correct and the concerned officials or individuals are aware of the status.
6. Provides direct consultation to public officials, community agencies and private individuals to provide accurate information concerning admission procedures, policies and options.
7. Processes and handles applications and the necessary documentation required to transfer patients in and out of state, from county jails, mental health centers or veterans' hospitals and between programs within the institution to ensure state and institution rules and regulations are followed.
8. Supervises subordinates staff to ensure the goals and objectives of the admission department is met.
 - a. Interviews, selects, and trains new employees.
 - b. Assigns work.
 - c. Approves leave.
 - d. Addresses employee problems.
 - e. Appraises work performance.
9. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically supervises clerical staff who type petitions, correspondence letters, reports, and other narrated materials; answers routine questions on admissions; aides in the preparation of materials and makes arrangements for hearings; orders supplies; maintains admission and patient records and files; and provides other clerical support.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to apply mental health rules, regulations, and laws that pertain to patient commitments, admissions, discharges or day to day occurrences; and to determine the legal residency of clients who have been transitory or homeless and to keep abreast of the numerous types of admissions and the different procedures applied to each one.

Typical problems include determining the appropriateness of releasing classified information; settling disputes of patients' residency; obtaining necessary legal documents; getting physicians to make written recommendations or assessments in a timely manner; reviewing inaccurate or incomplete admissions reports; and making arrangements for emergency admissions.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include determining the accuracy and completeness of admissions documentation; whether the legal requirements for admission have been met and if appropriate action should be taken; determining the type of admission; advising community agencies to pursue admission versus voluntary hospitalization; releasing confidential information; what information is placed on commitment petitions, surgical permits or interstate transfer applications; interpreting statutes, policies, and guidelines; and budgetary decisions.

Decisions referred include admission referrals with serious physical handicaps; admissions with very serious legal charges; events where the threat of a lawsuit exists; administrative policies; and approval of travel requests; the budget request of the admissions office.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with mental health centers, private psychiatrists, social service agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, mental health professionals and private individuals regarding admission referrals, commitments, policies and procedures; law enforcement officials, attorneys and judges regarding patients' legal background, hearings, discharges and to obtain legal documents; mental health boards concerning admission procedures and policies; and institution staff to obtain recommendations for commitment and treatment plans.

H. Working Conditions:

Typical office environment.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- the principles and practices of mental illness and the laws, policies, and procedures pertaining to the rights of the patients' of admissions procedures;
- office procedures;
- effective methods of supervision.

Ability to:

- interpret laws and policies;
- maintain confidentiality;
- communicate legal information clearly and concisely;
- establish and maintain good relationships with staff, agencies, and patients.